



BABES IN THE WATER



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PRE SWIMMING POOL

Babies just born will enjoy being bathed. But be aware, in the same way that you get bored just sitting, baby will find bath time dull if they have nothing to do.

Bath time should take place at least twice a week, with if possible, two persons involved, both parents, or a grandparent etc.

Bath water should be comfortable warm - cold water tenses babies.

Babies movements are uncontrollable, arms and legs jerk in all directions, often splashing in all directions - if you show that splashing bothers you - your baby will become tense.

Plan bathtime - dress yourself for the wet, arrange cloths in the bathroom to mop up without a fuss.

Place a non-slip mat on the bottom of the bath.

Always support baby's head so they do not slip into the water.

Soapy water should be removed from baby's eyes as soon as possible.

If baby cries - dry his eyes and carry on as if nothing has happened (splash your own face and laugh).

Smile and talk in a quiet reassuring voice all the time.

Place a plastic mirror in front of baby so that he can see himself having fun. As baby gets older

place the mirror on the bottom of the bath to encourage baby to look at himself in the water with his eyes submerged.

In summer when toddlers take to the garden do not over react to it as something unpleasant. While in the garden let your child play supervised with water - water the plants. The more positive they become to water the sooner they will enjoy the involvement.

Showers will become second nature. Stand under the shower with baby in your arms so they feel secure. Plastic mirror placed on the wall will let him see the water running down his face. Before long showers will be as much fun as bath time.

BEFORE TAKING THE PLUNGE

Problems at your first lesson often begin in the changing room. Go prepared and make certain both you and your child enjoy its first swimming experience.

COME PREPARED - Check List

1. Baby's swimming costume
2. Parent's swimming costume
3. Three towels - one for baby one for parent and one for the floor of the changing room.
4. A means of fastening back parents or baby's hair.
5. A snack for baby.
6. Nappy changing needs
7. Baby lotion
8. **MOST IMPORTANT - BABY'S FAVOURITE WATER RESISTANT TOY.**

ARRIVE EARLY

Babies understand parents body language if parent is relaxed the more secure and calm baby will be.

DRESS SENSIBLY

Before the first lesson let baby see you dressed ready for the water. Babies become insecure seeing their parents dressed differently from normal. Baby should wear a swimsuit of your choice but make sure it is not too absorbent or it will drag your baby down in the water.

Choose a suit with well fitted legs to catch unpredicted bowel movement. Bowel movements are very rare but you will be less embarrassed if the matter stays inside the swimming costume.

Nappies are not necessary, both disposable and terry become heavy with water and hinder baby's movements. If a bowel movement does occur, parents are mostly aware of it and you would quickly remove yourself and baby from the water - inform the instructor who will make certain no leakage has occurred - or if necessary deal with any that does.

Your costume should preferably be one piece, this will be more comfortable and less trouble.

EATING BEFORE A LESSON

Babies unlike competitive swimmers who would not train on a full stomach should be given a light snack 15 minutes or so before the lesson, a rusk, or with older babies a biscuit or a piece of fruit of some kind. This will prevent hunger pains during the lesson. A biscuit after the lesson also helps mum or dad keep baby quiet while they are dressing.

REST BEFORE THE LESSON

Your baby should be alert when coming to its classes - a tired baby needs warmth and a snug place to sleep - a pool is none of these. Water awareness classes tend to make baby tired and you will find baby ready for a short nap after the lesson.

GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Make friends with the other parents and babies. This will help relax the lessons and babies will learn more easily. If baby is enjoying the play with other babies he is less likely to get bored. Watching other children enjoying the water will help your baby to join in and enjoy the water.

POINTS TO ALWAYS REMEMBER

1. Submerge to your shoulder level. Babies held out of the water will soon become cold.
2. Watch baby's face - baby's face is nearer to the water than yours. If you become distracted baby's face may fall below the water. By watching his face at all times you are also aware of baby's reactions to the lesson and can respond quickly.
3. Keep moving - your baby becomes aware that by moving their arms and legs they will stay afloat. Movement also generates heat, if you remain still in the water you will become cold.
4. Freedom - children eager to learn must be given freedom. You will have to experiment to find the best way to hold your active baby.

5. Be adventurous - do not be over cautious - use your imagination and play games.
6. Allow the Timid Child time to adjust - do not hurry a baby who is cautious. Give them time they will learn in their own time.
7. Be aware your baby is crying - babies communicate by crying. They cry for many reasons, the least likely is being in the water. If you get out every time your baby cries they will begin to associate water with crying. Try to find the reason for crying.

MEDICAL

You can take a child of six months swimming providing the conditions are right. However it is unwise to take them swimming much before this as they become chilled very easily. Never take babies to the pool with open sores, or upper respiratory infections.

TUITION

Ask at your local pool if the swimming teacher has ASA Parent and Child Water Activities qualifications. Sign up for courses and learn how to enjoy the water with your baby.

If you require any further information, please contact:

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